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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

June 13, 2006

Dr. John H. Marburger, III
Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Dr. Marburger:

I am disturbed by reports that officials at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) have tried to prevent or discourage their scientists from speaking publicly about the scientists' findings on the subject of global warming.

Major news media have reported allegations of climate science censorship at these four agencies. In 2002, *The New York Times* broke the news of the Administration's attempted alteration of the climate change section of the EPA Report on the Environment. Earlier this year, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* reported that NASA and NOAA officials tried to prevent the agencies' scientists from speaking publicly about their global warming findings. A June 8, 2006, article in the *Rocky Mountain News* reported allegations that a "climate cover-up is occurring at several federal agencies", including NASA, NOAA, and the USFS.

In response to a letter that Senator Susan Collins and I sent to NASA Administrator, Dr. Michael Griffin, that agency recently admitted that a media request to interview one of its climate scientists had been declined inappropriately. NASA also acknowledged allegations of several instances in which its officials inappropriately edited scientific materials prepared by its scientists. The Administrators of NASA and NOAA have made statements in support of scientific openness; however, the occurrence of allegations across four different government agencies raises the possibility that negative signals regarding scientific openness, particularly as regards climate change, might be traveling from a central source of authority to multiple Executive Branch departments. I am writing to ask that you investigate that possibility and report your findings to me. Specifically, I ask that you:

- 1) Determine whether any official or unofficial request or guidance has been issued to the federal agencies by the Executive Office of the President with respect to public dissemination of scientific findings related to climate change.

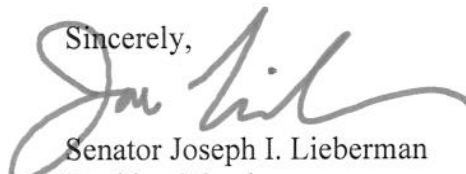
- 2) If evidence of such a request or guidance is not discovered, investigate and determine why, even in the absence of such guidance, the suppression of scientists' climate-change findings appears to be occurring simultaneously across more than one government agency.

To impress upon you the importance of your investigation, I would like to highlight my specific concerns with these allegations. First, censorship discourages some of the best scientific minds in the country from conducting climate research and communicating the results of that research with the American public. Second, American taxpayers fund government science and deserve to get the best possible return on their investment. Government agencies must continue to fulfill their crucial role of informing the American public; scientific information is imperative to our understanding of how global warming will affect our nation and how we can best combat it.

As you know, the mission of the Office of Science and Technology Policy is to advise the President and others within the Executive Office of the President on the bearing that science and technology have on domestic and international affairs and to lead an interagency effort to develop and to implement sound science and technology policies and budgets. I hope you appreciate how corrosive political pressure is to sound science. President Bush has directed that "climate change research activities be accelerated to provide the best possible scientific information to support public discussion and decision making on climate-related issues." I am confident, then, that the allegations of censorship imposed on government climate scientists are of utmost concern to you.

The ability to communicate freely is integral to the process of scientific discovery that has helped build our great nation. I look forward to hearing the results of your investigation, and appreciate your prompt response to this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Senator Joseph I. Lieberman
Ranking Member